

## **“Money and Giving, Part 2” - 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 – December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, "Money and Giving."
- For the benefit of those who weren't with us last week we only got to verse one in what ended up being more of an introduction.
- We'll pick it up where we left off starting in verse one where we looked at the first reason the early church gave so cheerfully.

### **1. Giving is a gift (Verse 1)**

- Here Paul tells them that he wants them to know about God's grace and God's gift by way of the Macedonian churches giving.

### **2. Giving is a sacrifice (Verses 2-3)**

- v2 Paul says of the other churches, while in severe trials, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.
- v3 He then says they gave as much as they could and even beyond their ability, and that they gave entirely of their own volition.
- What Paul is saying here is that it's usually the ones who don't have wealth that give more than those who do have the wealth.

Of this one commentator aptly noted that, "The example of the Macedonians is practical proof that true generosity is not the prerogative of those who enjoy an adequacy of means. The most genuine liberality is frequently displayed by those who have least to give. Christian giving is estimated in terms not of quantity but of sacrifice."

### **3. Giving is a privilege (Verse 4)**

- v4 Paul says they actually pleaded with him with an urgency to have the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.
- If you were to ask me why it is that most Christians don't give of their finances, this would have to be one of the main reasons.
- Namely, that they don't see it as a privilege. Perhaps better said, they don't see giving as a get to; they see giving as a got to.

### **4. Giving is God's will (Verse 5)**

- v5 Paul of the other churches says they exceeded his expectations giving first to the Lord, then by the will of God also to them.
- To me this speaks very clearly to giving being the will of God such that, it's according to God's Word and God's will for our lives.
- More specifically, that of giving of ourselves first and foremost to the Lord, with the understanding that this is the will of the Lord.

The story is told of an offering that was being taken during a revival in Africa. A brand-new Christian told the deacon holding the collection plate to put it lower. "Lower, lower, lower," he said—until the offering plate was on the ground. Then he stood up and stepped in. This man understood. This brand-new believer got the picture. He gave himself.

Romans 12:1–2 (NIV) — 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

### **5. Giving is an act of Grace (Verses 6-7)**

- 6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.
- v6 Paul tells them how they urged Titus, just as he did earlier, to bring also to completion this act of grace on the part of Corinth.
  - v7 He then says that since they excel in things like faith, speech and knowledge they should also excel in this grace of giving.
  - One can't help but notice what one has called, Paul's sanctified sarcasm in how he tells them that they excel in everything else.

- I find it rather interesting that Paul refers to giving money as a grace four times in just the first seven verses of chapter eight.
- I suppose the question becomes one of why. Why and perhaps more importantly, how, is giving to be seen as an act of grace?
- There are several ways giving is an act of grace, chief of which is that giving is a demonstration of a work of God's grace in us.

Alan Redpath said it best this way, "Once you see the matter of giving is centered in this lovely word grace, it lifts the whole act away from mechanics, from pressure and duty, from obligation and mere legalism. It lifts us up into the most lovely atmosphere of an activity which seeks by giving to convey to others all that is lovely, all that is beautiful, all that is good, and all that is glorious. What a lovely word this word is ... For there is no area in the Christian life in which grace shines out so much, so beautifully, so delightfully, and so happily as when giving comes from the background of poverty."

### **6. Giving is a test of our love (Verses 8-9)**

- 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
- v8 Paul says he's not commanding them, but that it's a test of sincerity of love by comparing it to the earnestness of others.
  - v9 He Jesus is the example of, though being rich, for our sake became poor so that we through His poverty might become rich.
  - What Paul is saying here is that our giving will be proportionate to and a demonstration of our authenticity and sincerity of love.

I'll close with what I would argue is the greatest and grandest example of this in John 3:16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.